

Bible Study March 1, 2023

HEBREWS 5 (AMPLIFIED VERSION)

The Perfect High Priest

¹ For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed [to act] on behalf of men in things relating to God, so that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He is able to deal gently with the spiritually ignorant and misguided, since he is also subject to human weakness; ³ and because of this [human weakness] he is required to offer sacrifices for sins, for himself as well as for the people. ⁴ And besides, one does not appropriate for himself the honor [of being high priest], but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

⁵ So too Christ did not glorify Himself so as to be made a high priest, but He [was exalted and appointed by the One] who said to Him,

***“YOU ARE MY SON,
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN (fathered) You [declared Your authority and rule over the nations]”;***

⁶ just as He also says in another place,

***“YOU ARE A PRIEST [appointed] FOREVER
ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.”***

This chapter stresses both Christ's divine appointment and his human experience of suffering. The writer uses two Old Testament verses to show Christ's divine appointment: Psalms 2:7 and 110:4. At the time this book was written, the Romans were the ones to select the high priest in Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, however, we see that God chose Aaron and determined that only Aaron's descendants could be high priests. Christ, like Aaron, was chosen and called by God.

Melchizedek, a contemporary of Abraham's, was a priest of God Most High and king of Salem (later called Jerusalem). See his profile is on page 0000. Melchizedek's position is explained in Hebrews 7.

⁷ In the days of His earthly life, Jesus offered up both [specific] petitions and [urgent] supplications [for that which He needed] with fervent crying and tears to the One who was [always] able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission toward God [His sinlessness and His unflinching determination to do the Father's will].

Jesus experienced great agony as he prepared to face death (Luke 22:41-44). Although he cried out to God, asking to be delivered, he was prepared to suffer humiliation, separation from his Father, and death in order to do God's will. At times we will undergo trials, not because we want to suffer, but because we want to submit to God's will. Let Jesus' example of obedience

sustain and encourage you in times of trial. You will be able to face anything if you know that Jesus Christ stands with you.

⁸ Although He was a Son [who had never been disobedient to the Father], He learned [active, special] obedience through what He suffered.

Jesus' human life was not a script that he passively followed. He chose this life freely (John 10:17-18). It was a continuous process of making the will of God the Father his own. Jesus chose to obey, even though submission led to suffering and death.

By his obedience, Jesus did not gain new character traits that he had lacked before; rather, his experiences brought him more empathy with our human condition. No one understands us like Jesus.

⁹ And having been made perfect [uniquely equipped and prepared as Savior and retaining His integrity amid opposition], He became the source of eternal salvation [an eternal inheritance] to all those who obey Him,

Christ was always morally perfect. By obeying God the Father, he demonstrated his perfection to us, not to God or to himself. In the Bible, perfect usually means "complete" or "mature." By sharing even our experience of suffering, Christ shared our human experience completely. This gives us confidence in the eternal salvation he offers to those who submit to him. (For more about the attitude Christ demonstrated as he gave up his divine privileges to be born as a human being, see Philippians 2:5-11.)

The fact that we have been offered eternal salvation means that the verdict on our sin has been eliminated, judgment has been set aside, and undeserved membership in God's family has been awarded to us. This salvation changes our destiny, awakens our hope, and overcomes death.

Salvation turns a person toward heaven and starts the journey of discipleship with the living Christ. It is God's invitation to you and his energy invested in you. Because he has saved you, you can smile in the morning and rest in the evening. God loves you, and you belong to him.

¹⁰ being designated by God as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

¹¹ Concerning this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull and sluggish in [your spiritual] hearing and disinclined to listen. ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers [because of the time you have had to learn these truths], you actually need someone to teach you again the elementary principles of God's word [from the beginning], and you have come to be continually in need of milk, not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who lives on milk is [doctrinally inexperienced and] unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a spiritual infant.

These Jewish Christians were immature and lazy. Some of them should have been teaching others, but they had not even applied the foundational principles of the faith to their own lives. They were reluctant to move beyond age-old traditions, established doctrines, and discussions of the basics. They wouldn't be able to understand the role of Christ as High Priest unless they

moved out of their comfortable position, cut some of their Jewish ties, and stopped trying to blend in with their culture. Commitment to Christ moves people out of their comfort zones.

¹⁴ But solid food is for the [spiritually] mature, whose senses are trained by practice to distinguish between what is morally good and what is evil.

In order to grow from infant Christians to mature Christians, we must learn discernment. We must train our consciences, our senses, our minds, and our bodies to distinguish good from evil. Can you recognize temptation before it traps you? Can you tell the difference between a correct use of Scripture and a mistaken one? At church and in small groups, we can bring up questions and problem situations before they overcome us. Good advice from mature believers can help us know what to do when trouble comes.

Our capacity to feast on deeper knowledge of God (“solid food”) is determined by our spiritual growth. Too often we want a banquet from God before we are spiritually capable of digesting it. As you grow in the